

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-03 SS-20 NSC-07

DRC-01 /079 W

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P R 151818Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6867

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 0460

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, AC

SUBJ: CIVAIR: GOA INCENSED OVER PAA FLIGHT SUSPENSION

1. DEPUTY BRITISH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE HAS TELEPHONED EMBASSY FROM ANTIGUA TO REPORT THAT GOA IS EXTREMELY UPSET OVER PAA DECISION TO SUSPEND FLIGHTS TO THAT ISLAND FROM APRIL 22 TO DEC 15, 1974 AND ISSUED "INTEMPERATE" PRESS RELEASE MARCH 14. FOLLOWING NOTIFICATION OF SUSPENSION BY PAA REP TO PREMIER WALTER LAST WEEK, GOA, CONCERNED OVER ADVERSE IMPCT OF SUSPENSION ON OFF-SEASON TOURISM AND OVER PROBABLE LAY OFF OF SOME 60 PAA EMPLOYEES, HAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED PAA DIRECTLY AS WELL AS SOME FOREIGN COMPANIES AND GOVERNMENTS INDIRECTLY.

2. PAA REPS AT ANTIGUA AND BRIDGETOWN, CITING STEADILY DECLINING NUMBER OF PASSENGERS, RISING FUEL COSTS, DESCRIBED SUSPENSION DECISION TO EMBOFF AS ECONOMY MEASURE, SIMILAR TO SUSPENSIONS ELSEWHERE (PARAMARIBO, BELEM). PAA REP ADDED THAT AIRLINE HAD LONG HAD TROUBLE WITH BOTH GOA AND UNION OVER SERIOUS OVER-STAFFING OF ANTIGUA STATION. PAA CLAIMS THAT GOA/UNION HAVE STEADILY RESISTED DEMANDS TO REDUCE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES TO LEVEL COMMENSURATE WITH WORKLOAD. PAA ALSO UNCLASSIFIED

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CRITICIZED "UNWORKABLE" UNION REGULATIONS, CITING AS EXAMPLE

EQUAL SHIFT RULE THAT REQUIRES SAME NUMBER OF GROUND CREW TO SERVICE TWO LARGE JETS AS TO HANDLE 20-PASSENGER INTER-ISLAND PLANE. PAA INFORMS US THAT IT WISHES TO KEEP MINIMUM STAFF (UNDER 10) AT ANTIGUA WITH HOPES OF RESUMING SERVICE AFTER DEC 15.

3. DEPUTY BRITISH GOVT REP BASED ON ANTIGUA INFORMS US THAT HE HAS NOTIFIED U.K. CIVAIR ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON SO THAT LATTER CAN MAKE REPRESENTATION TO CAB IF NECESSARY. (U.K. HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANTIGUA'S EXTERNAL AFFAIRS). ACCORDING TO PAA, GOA IS HIRING LAWYER TO PRESENT ITS CASE AT CAB HEARING SET FOR MARCH 18. PAA REP FEELS THAT RECENT BRITISH AIRWAYS DECISION SUSPEND FLIGHTS TO ANTIGUA, GEORGETOWN, PORT OF SPAIN AND BARBADOS (BTN A-16) WILL TEMPER ANY U.K. EFFORTS TO PUSH FOR CONTINUATION ON BEHALF OF GOA.
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